DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 183 142 IR 008 052

AUTHOR Pettit, Katherine D., Ed.
TITLE Collection Development: Papers Presented April 6, 1978.
PUB DATE Apr 78
NOTE 35p.: Papers presented at the Annual Conference of the Texas Library Association (65th, Fort Worth, TX, April 5-6, 1978).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Libraries: Decision Making: *Library Collections: *Policy Formation: *Public Libraries
IDENTIFIERS *Collection Development

ABSTRACT

Three conference papers on the formulation of collection development policies are presented in this report: (1) Richard W. Blood, Assistant Professor and Social Sciences Bibliographer, General Libraries, University of Houston, discusses both the theoretical considerations behind an academic library's decision to write such a policy and the attributes of a good collection development document: (2) Gerald Bishop, Head Librarian, Bibliography Department, General Libraries, University of Texas at Austin, reports on the experience of writing such a policy for a large academic library, and the value of that policy in the on-going process of collection management: and (3) Michael J. Benedict, Co-Ordinator of Materials Selection, Houston Public Library, shares his experience of creating the collection development statements of a large public library. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED183142

Collection Development: Papers Presented

April 6, 1978

by the

Acquisitions Round Table

at the

Texas Library Association's

65th Annual Conference

Tarrant County Convention Center

Fort Worth, Texas

April 5-6, 1978

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Katherine D. Pettit

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Taped and Edited by: Katherine D. Pettit
Assistant Professor
Trinity University Library
San Antonio, Texas

IR006052

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface..... ii

Program.....iii

INTRODUCTION..... 1
Layton B. Murphy

REASONS FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES TO FORMULATE A COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY, AND THE ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY..... 4
Richard W. Blood

THE EXPERIENCE OF FORMULATING A COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR A LARGE ACADEMIC LIBRARY, AND THE VALUE OF A COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN THE ON-GOING PROCESS OF COLLECTION MANAGEMENT..... 20
Gerald Bishop

DECISION MAKING AND THE LIMITS OF POLICY..... 26
Michael J. Benedict

Notes..... 30

Preface

The theme of the conference was "Exploring . . . Enjoying This Business of Libraries". Such, hopefully, was accomplished by those participating in the annual business/program meeting of the Acquisitions Round Table. So that those who were unable to attend might share the experience, a magnetic tape was made of the program segment of that meeting. Based upon this tape, reports were prepared and edited. Several "Notes" were added for the benefit of those who might not have easy access to the information mentioned in the presentations.

A special acknowledgement and many thanks are extended to Christine Burns who so patiently typed and retyped this document.

Katherine D. Pettit

December 1978

Program

ACQUISITIONS ROUND TABLE BUSINESS/PROGRAM MEETING
Convention Center, A-243
1:45 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Presiding:
Iris Jeffress, Serials Librarian
Baylor University, Waco

Program:

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Program Chairman:
Layton B. Murphy, Ph.D., Associate Professor,
Graduate School of Library Science,
University of Texas, Austin

Speakers:
Richard W. Blood, Assistant Professor and Social
Sciences Bibliographer,
General Libraries,
University of Houston, Houston

Gerald Bishop, Head Librarian,
Bibliography Department,
General Libraries,
University of Texas, Austin

Michael J. Benedict, Coordinator of Materials Selection,
Houston Public Library, Houston

INTRODUCTION

Layton B. Murphy, Ph. D.

Since a recent survey by the Acquisitions Round Table of the Texas Library Association indicated that automated acquisitions systems, and collection development were the two highest-ranked possibilities for future programs sponsored by the Acquisitions Round Table, and since last year's program was devoted to automated acquisitions systems, collection development was selected as the topic for this year's presentation.

Collection development is a newly-emerging specialization within librarianship. The rise of this new specialty is largely the result of the radically different budgetary situations faced by most libraries in the 1970's, compared with the relatively extravagant years of the 1960's. The emphasis of the 1960's was on collection growth, but the emphasis of the 1970's is shifting, for budgetary reasons, to collection management and analysis.

The emphasis of libraries on collection management is reflected in library organization charts of the 1970's, with many now having collection development departments, assistant directors for collection development, or collection development committees. Increased interest in collection management is reflected, also, in the activities of the American Library Association, including the renaming of the Acquisitions Section of the Resources and Technical Services

Division to the Resources Section, the establishing of a Collection Development Committee within the Resources Section of the Resources and Technical Services Division, and the scheduling of a highly successful pre-conference on collection development before last year's annual conference of the American Library Association.

A new professional specialization often spawns one or more new journals. Collection development is no exception. It now has its own specialized journal entitled Collection Management.(1)

Collection development includes the formulation of collection development policies, collection evaluation and analysis techniques, procedures for allocating library materials budgets, weeding techniques, and so forth. Rather than attempt the impossible task of covering all the topics within collection development in one program, and rather than cover unrelated aspects of collection development, it was felt that the formulation of collection development policies would be a good focus for this year's program. Formulation of collection development policies will be discussed by the three speakers.

First, Richard W. Blood, Assistant Professor and Social Sciences Bibliographer, General Libraries, at the University of Houston, will present the theoretical reasoning behind an academic library's decision to formulate a collection development policy, and the attributes of a good collection development policy. Next, Gerald Bishop, Head Librarian, Bibliography Department, General Libraries, University of Texas at Austin, will discuss the experience of formulating a collection development policy for a

large academic library, and the value of a collection development policy in the on-going process of collection management. Finally, Michael J. Benedict, Coordinator of Materials Selection at the Houston Public Library, will share the planning now underway by a large public library about to embark on the process of formulating a collection development policy.

REASONS FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES TO FORMULATE A COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND THE ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Richard W. Blood

Before discussing why academic libraries should formulate a collection development policy, it is necessary to distinguish among collection development, selection, and acquisition.

Collection development is a planning function which describes the short- and long-term goals of the collection, identifies users' short- and long-term needs, and correlates the collection accordingly. It is strictly a planning function aimed at developing the bibliographic plan of the library. Selection is one of many functions included within collection development. It is the decision-making function for implementing the collection goals of the collection development policy. Acquisitions is a technical process which implements the selection decisions, the process which gets the selected materials into the library.

Many of the early collection development policies were, in fact, termed acquisitions policies. However, since these were policies which provided a framework for material selection, they were, in reality, collection development policies, not acquisitions policies. In a strict sense, acquisitions policies are policies related to the operation of an acquisitions department, and include such matters as conditions under which the library prepays for orders, conditions under which materials are returned to publishers, and so forth.

There are six major reasons why academic libraries should formulate a collection development policy:

1. First, and foremost, a policy should be formulated to plan for developing collections supportive of the goals and objectives of the library and its parent institution. A survey conducted by the Systems and Procedures Exchange Center of the Association of Research Libraries, Office of Management Studies, to determine the reasons given by the association's libraries for formulating collection development policies, revealed that clarification of library goals and objectives was the paramount justification. The policy should serve as a guideline, and should relate the nature and scope of the developing collections to the instructional or research needs of the parent institution. The dynamism of the university library's total academic program results from the influence of changing research and instructional activities, and the growth of collections. This dynamism should be reflected in the policy for collection development as its fundamental rationale.

Among all the activities commonly ascribed to management - planning, budgeting, staffing, controlling, and so forth - planning probably has the highest payoff. It is important to regard the formulation of a collection development policy as a planning process, and collection development depends inherently on the capability to plan. The selection of one book and the rejection of ten others, within the confines of a budget, clearly

implies a plan. The more carefully it is worked out, the better.

Since the operations of a university library flow from the effort of bringing together library materials in the academic community in the most significant manner possible, a policy for collection development is basic to planning for a broad range of library operations. A new academic program depends heavily on the resources, including library resources which are available, and those which must be planned for and made available to support it. Similarly, plans to strengthen, to de-emphasize, or to cancel academic programs must include consideration of library resources on hand or obtainable, if those plans are to be implemented in the most effective way, just as, once adopted, the academic plan must be reflected in the collection development policy. Whereas, the collection of the future is largely flexible and can be molded to meet anticipated academic needs, the collection of the present represents a massive investment of money, time, energy, and years of committment to an established intellectual direction. This should not be ignored when the future of academic programs is contemplated.

Collections should result directly from planned policy and only indirectly from the fluctuations of purchasing power. Reductions in the acquisitions program should not be accomplished on the basis of price alone. In the absence of a comprehensive and detailed policy, the reverse order tends to prevail, so that collections result directly from the fluctuations of purchasing

power, and indirectly from the series of discreet ad-hoc policies established in a desperate attempt to adapt to the changing situation. When this is the case, policies are, in fact, defensive operations with a negative connotation, rather than initiative measures with a positive thrust. As such, they are not likely, in the long run, to be advantageous to the university library.

The existence of a collection development policy would clearly establish priorities, and would minimize damage done to collections as a result of a continued erosion of library purchasing power. Without a collection development policy, a library is tempted to respond to a ten-percent decline in purchasing power by across-the-board cuts of ten-percent buying for all subjects and all formats. With a policy, however, cutbacks in library buying can be guided so as to do the least possible damage to the collections' ability to support instructional and research needs.

This holds true for the reverse situation as well, wherein large infusions of money into the acquisitions budget are simply spent in the absence of a policy, but not necessarily wisely or to the greatest benefit of the university. It is fairly easy to spend large sums of money on library materials in a short span of time, but it is extremely difficult to spend large sums both quickly and wisely. The existence of a policy facilitates the wise expenditure of large and unexpected sums of money because priorities have already been identified. A comprehensive policy anticipates changing situations, both for the better and for the

worse, which are beyond the control of the library, and provides a rational set of plans for adapting to those situations.

2. A collection development policy should be formulated to guide those responsible for the selection of material. As such, it translates the goals and objectives into specific guidelines for collecting the various subject fields in scope, depth, and various types of format. This enables selectors to work with greater consistency toward defined goals, thus shaping stronger collections and using limited funds more wisely.

Material selection is subject to the influences of personal buying, seasonal preferences, and to changing fads. A policy, however, alleviates the impact of personal preferences and fads, and promotes the consistent and balanced growth of collections. It emphasizes both long-term needs and immediate demands. By balanced growth is meant not equal depth of collections in all subjects, but considered emphases from the perspective of the university's instructional and research programs, both current and anticipated.

The collection development policy insures stability in the growth of collections. Beyond the flexibility to adapt to specific changes from year to year, the policy on collections should have a pervading quality which expresses stability in the particular strengths established in the library's collections. Some collections, often qualified as special, emerge historically, either by accident of a large restricted gift or as a result of some influential bibliophile's biases. These special collections

beccme important to the university because of the programs they can support, and simply due to the prestige which they bring. They are important, also, to the geographic region and to the national academic community at large because they are rich and rare resources upon which they place great dependence. Such collections of record lend a mark of distinction to a university, independent of their immediate demand within the institution. Therefore, the policy should encourage continuity of direction given to special strengths in the library's holdings. This continuity of direction fulfills a research library's mission which transcends the vagaries of daily, and local supply and demand.

A policy provides equity in terms of users who are both verbal and specific about their needs, and those users who are not. It is a guarantee against undue special interest pressure which can be both inclusionary and exclusionary. It provides selectors with a formal and impersonal means of saying "No" to overly-articulate and greedy users and it, thus, enables selectors to base their decisions on the needs of the entire community of users.

A policy functions, also, as a training tool for selectors, whether they are new to the university or new to the collection development process. Where there are principles of selection which may be universal, there are also principles which vary from subject to subject, and from university to university. For example, historically-oriented collections still require a systematic program for the acquisition of both out-of-print and current material. This

is not the case, however, in such subjects as nuclear physics, where current material is far and away the major concern. The passing on of selection principles from an experienced selector to a novice is the traditional, but not always the best, method of training, for it transmits the biases and the prejudices of a generally subjective or impressionistic policy designed in one mind.

A far worse method of initiating the selector is to leave him to his own devices. Although this method is in common use, it has a great guarantee of failure which, unfortunately, may not become evident for many years, since the results of errors in selection are easily obscured in the midst of a large research collection, and errors of judgement are not immediately identifiable. However, with a carefully-planned policy in hand, and with the guidance of an experienced selector, a librarian with relevent subject training can take up selection responsibilities, and learn through experience to render positive service to the library.

3. A collection development policy should be formulated to provide a framework for rational decision making concerning other issues in collection management. A collection development policy provides a sound basis for designing a library's profile which is needed to initiate blanket order and approval plans, and for changing that profile in response to changes in vendors' subject classifications. It is useful in determining which materials should be removed from the main collections, either for discard or storage. It identifies and resolves specific questions concerning the location

of materials within a library system, and provides a rational framework for considerations of added-copy purchases. A well-planned policy, with established priorities, can also guide the allocation of the library materials budget. Since the policy establishes specific collecting levels for each major subject and sub-division, it sets the criteria and the parameters for future collection evaluation.

4. A collection development policy should be formulated to communicate information concerning collections to a wide range of funding agencies, administrators, faculty and staff. Second only to salaries and wages, the largest category in the university library's operating budget is acquisitions, constituting approximately one-fourth to over one-half or more of the budget. At the same time, acquisitions is also the least understood part of the library's expenditures, both from the viewpoint of various levels of funding agencies and from the point-of-view of library users. A comprehensive collection development policy provides a convenient medium through which to communicate the fact that collection development follows a systematic rational plan to meet specific needs. A comprehensive and detailed policy can correct the notion of many funding agencies and administrators that libraries are bottomless pits, for a policy establishes collection priorities, and details subjects and formats for which little or no funds are expended. A well-written and logically-organized policy informs users, administrators, trustees and others of the scope and nature of existing collections, and the

plans for continuing development of resources. A policy provides the faculty with a better understanding of the library's strengths and weaknesses as a research or teaching tool for recruiting or retaining first-class faculty and graduate students. Such understanding can improve the rapport between faculty and selection librarians and, thus, facilitate the task of selection.

5. A collection development policy should be formulated to facilitate networking in cooperative agreements for resource sharing. Even the largest research libraries acknowledge the impossibility of building totally self-sufficient collections, and increasingly need to rely on cooperative activities. Collection development policies assist cooperative collection building and, in the absence of such precise bibliographic tools as union catalogs, are of value to users and public service units in locating materials. While union catalogs are the bases for sharing what libraries already own, collection development policies are the bases for sharing what they will own in the future. A comprehensive policy serves as the foundation for any consideration of resource sharing and selection responsibilities with other libraries. A library's policy, therefore, should be coordinated with those of other appropriate libraries, whether in an hierarchy of dependence or in a division of responsibility among equals. A policy assists librarians in selecting and de-selecting in conformity with regional needs and resources. The major objective of resource sharing should not be to save money, but to provide better service. Resource sharing

must be progressive, not regressive. Networking, in the end, may cost more money, but be worth it in terms of improved accessibility to recorded knowledge.

6. Finally, a collection development policy should be formulated to reap the values associated with its formulation, for the very process of writing a collection development policy is one of intensive study and reflection. Several values are to be gained from the study: increased knowledge of the existing collection, and, perhaps more importantly, interaction of selectors and faculty as participants in the process. By interacting with the faculty in formulating a policy, selectors gain an improved understanding of specific faculty resource needs. Similarly, the faculty gain a better understanding of the financial and bibliographic resources which the library can put at their disposal to meet their needs. With an increased understanding of what the collection ought to be, measured against what it is, faculty awareness is focused on the quality of the collection, including its strengths and weaknesses. This is particularly important since it is the faculty which initiates doctoral and other programs which impact collections.

Having looked briefly at the reasons for formulating a collection development policy, let us look at the attributes of a good development policy.

1. It must take a universal perspective. Since the primary

aim of a collection development policy is to ensure a systematic selection of world-recorded knowledge according to a rationale which flows from the academic programs of the university, the perspective of the policy must be on the whole range of recorded human knowledge as it relates to local university needs. Attempting to provide a universal perspective, the process of formulating a policy often helps identify and fill in selection responsibility gaps.

2. It must be consistent, standardized, and comparable. Widespread budgetary constraints, and the growth of inter-library cooperation and resource sharing call for analyses of collection activity in standardized terms. Since one of the reasons for formulating a policy is to facilitate the sharing of resources, the form and terminology of the policy must be sufficiently standardized to permit comparisons among institutions. Standardization does not imply uniformity of goals and objectives, but it does imply the use of standard definitions. To facilitate standardization of defining collecting levels, the Collection Development Committee of the Resource Section of the Resources and Technical Services Division of A.L.A. defines five levels of collecting activity: comprehensive, research, study, basic and minimal.

3. It must be comprehensible to many different types of potential users. Policies should clarify collection development objectives to administrators, funding agencies, faculty, staff and other users, as well as to cooperating institutions, enabling them to identify areas of strength in library collections. In

order to be comprehensible to many types of users, policies must be well written, free from professional jargon, well organized and, above all, follow a logical structure.

4. It must permit flexibility by providing for a review and revision mechanism. If the policy which guides collection development activity is to be responsive to the academic dynamics of the university, it must be easily adaptive to changing needs. There are many kinds of changes which should influence the policy: changes in instructional and research programs, in cooperative agreements with other libraries, in publication trends, in instructional or research methodology, in clientele. Specifically, the policy should be capable of expansion and contraction, both in terms of subject interest, and in terms of depth and breadth within subjects. Moreover, if the fluctuations of purchasing power are to be accommodated to the greatest advantage, or to the least disadvantage, the policy must lend itself to the assignment of priorities among its many elements.

Since the purpose of a policy is to insure stability, not rigidity, it must be revised from time to time. Policies should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that changes and users' needs are recognized, and that altered budgetary situations are confronted. The policy should require an annual review of collection development activities, and a review of the entire policy every three to five years. So that the policy may be revised as easily as possible, it should be in loose-leaf form, with a minimal logical cluster of information on each page.

5. It must have an introduction setting forth the basic parameters of collection development. The introduction to the policy provides the context in which the policy is to be understood and interpreted. It is a place for definitions and explanations. Expressed in terms consistent with overall university and library goals and objectives, the introduction should explain the philosophy behind collection development as it applies to the local library. The introduction should also contain a description of the organization of collection development and the assignment of responsibilities. It should indicate the audience for whom it is established, the need for such a policy and some of its special attributes. Furthermore, it should specify library objectives related to collections, and to university programs supported by collections, as well as priorities and limitations governing selections.

6. It should be organized for an academic library by subject and subject sub-divisions, with sections for special formats and technical policies. The policy should be organized in such a way that its logic is evident. Its larger divisions should be presented uniformly. The policy will be more useful, the less it depends on other documents or external explanations for its interpretation.

The elements to be considered in describing the collecting policy for each subject and subject sub-division are: language of the material, publication date, format, level of subject treatment, chronological coverage and geographic coverage. Certain

topics, such as area studies, require special treatment because of their inter-disciplinary nature. Other areas require special handling because of their nature; for example, special collections and reference collections. Separate policies should be prepared for such formats as microforms, newspapers and maps. Additionally, technical policies on gifts and exchanges, duplications, replacements and reserves should also be included.

7. It should mention related resources wherever applicable. A comprehensive collection development policy serves as the basic means for any consideration of resource sharing. Cooperative agreements, therefore, should be incorporated into the policy. Mention of resource-sharing agreements with other libraries, which contain complementary collections, provides valuable information to users, and clarifies the extent to which users can or must rely on the resources of other libraries to pursue their research. Mention of resources available through membership in the Center for Research Libraries,(2) if appropriate, should also be made. For example, in a statement on microforms, a member of the Center might state that large microform sets available through the Center for Research Libraries will not be collected unless they are of exceptional value to local users. Similarly, in a statement on government documents, it might be noted that state documents will not be collected because of their availability through the Center.

8. Finally, it must contain mechanisms to facilitate access to specific information contained therein. The complete policy

contains a great deal of information. This information is useful to a wide-ranging audience for a variety of purposes. Some of the information is generalized, much of it is extremely detailed and a number of perspectives are brought to bear on the whole. The greater ease one has in gaining access to that information, the greater the liklihood that its potential value will be realized. Through the use of features common to good reference tools, any bit of information contained in the policy should be located as randomly as necessary. The features include: (1) a detailed table of contents, consisting of broad categories sub-divided as necessary, (2) a syndetic structure throughout the text; for example, if geomorphology is discussed in the policy statement on geography, a cross-reference should be made in the geology statement, (3) a detailed index containing subjects used in the subject and subject sub-division, names of departments and any other useful key words.

In conclusion, a collection development policy only defines a framework for material selection. Each title must still be individually selected. A policy is a guideline, not a crutch; it does not guarantee a good collection, but it helps. Selection must still be based upon subject expertise, knowledge of university programs, familiarity with publication patterns and the book trade, and on professional judgment. A collection development policy does lay a solid foundation for collection development, but no policy, however well-planned and implemented, can make up for

bibliographic incompetence, either in the selection or in the acquisition of materials. All three functions: collection development, material selection, and acquisitions must function well to develop a collection supporting the goals and objectives of the library and its parent institution.

THE EXPERIENCE OF FORMULATING A COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR A LARGE ACADEMIC LIBRARY AND THE VALUE OF A COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN THE ON-GOING PROCESS OF COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Gerald Bishop

If you are wondering whether or not the University of Texas collection development policy embodies at least most of the virtues of a good policy, which Richard has enumerated, I think it does. However, since my primary task this afternoon is to describe the experience which we had in compiling our collection development policy for each of the libraries, I would like to report briefly on the procedures followed, from the beginning of our considerations and deliberations, to the finished product which is this book (Collection Development Policy: General Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, November 1976).[3] Before giving a brief description of the policy and the use to which it is put, let me, first of all, present the procedures which we followed in "putting the book together".

In the Fall of 1972, a collection development committee was established to formulate a general policy which would serve as a guide to the acquisition of library materials for the General Libraries which presently include: (1) the Perry-Castaneda Library (the Main Library), (2) the Undergraduate Library, (3) the Collections Deposit Library, (4) thirteen branch libraries, and (5) four Special Collections: namely, the Asian Collection, the Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, and the Middle East Collection. This first committee,

consisting of six librarians, was appointed to serve as a coordinating group for the development of the policy. The policy, itself, was constructed of statements composed by library bibliographers, with the consultation of faculty members. Such consultation with the faculty is absolutely essential if you are to have an acceptable and viable document. There are a number of reasons this consultation is very helpful. I will touch on them later.

After the statements were written and revised, panel meetings were held, in which members of the committee and a number of faculty participated. Particular emphasis was placed upon the approach being used to develop the policy, the format, and the wording of the subject statements. The panels clustered around the Humanities and Fine Arts I and II, Social and Behavioral Sciences I and II, Science and Technology, Geographical and Vernacular Collections, Undergraduate Library and Special Collections. The consensus of these meetings was that the general format was usable, and that the project should continue.

The next step was to circulate the subject statements, which had been composed by the librarians, among the general faculty to get as broad as possible coverage of opinions on the particulars of each statement. The most frequent comments about the statements concerned the subject fields themselves, the aptness of the subject subdivisions, and the suggested levels of collecting. Following faculty suggestions, the statements were revised, and the final policy document assembled and indexed. The document was then presented to the University Library Committee which approved it.

Let me next give a brief description of the collection development document. The fifty-eight policy statements are of two types, those dealing with subjects closely related to the academic departments (as collected in the Main Library and in the branch libraries), and those dealing with such units as the Undergraduate Library, the Area and Vernacular Collections; that is, Latin American, Texan, Asian and Middle East Collections. Each policy statement includes the following: (1) a statement of purpose which enumerates both academic programs in the subject and known areas of interest in the subject outside the academic department primarily concerned, (2) a statement of general collecting guidelines which defines such considerations as languages, chronological and geographical emphases or restrictions, treatment of subject, types of materials, and dates of publication, and (3) the observations and qualifications by subject sub-divisions which assign collecting levels. Each subject and each subdivision of a subject has been assigned a specific collecting level. These are very similar to the ones alluded to by Mr. Blood.

The collecting levels used, together with a very brief definition, follow: Collecting Level A is the minimal level. Acquisitions are highly selective for reference, for general interest material, or for support of specific research. Collecting Level B is the undergraduate level. Standard works and selected current works, mostly in the English language, are collected primarily for the support of undergraduate instruction. Collecting Level C is the research level. Broad coverage of significant,

current primary and secondary sources relevant to vast research in the field are acquired. The C Level also provides for selective programs of retrospective purchasing. Collecting Level D is the comprehensive level. This implies that all currently-published relevant material will be acquired, subject to the specifications of the subject statements. This level allows for extensive programs of retrospective purchasing, and searching for lacunae. Finally, Collecting Level E is the exhaustive level. Collecting on this level represents an attempt to acquire all relevant published material in most editions and translations. Manuscripts and other supportive non-book materials are acquired as extensively as the budget permits. This is the level for the creation or maintenance of special collections.

The approach of the policy has been basically by subject, rather than by academic department. While many of the subjects for which statements appear are the chief concern of one particular department, policy statements are provided, also, for some subjects in which the university offers no specific program of concentration; for example, religion. The subject approach sometimes means that not all the topics of concern to a particular department will be found in one subject statement. The intent was to treat each topic in one place only and to provide cross-references where needed.

The Collection Development Policy, which was published in November 1976, is a written guide relating the General Libraries'

collecting policy to specific university teaching and research needs as revealed in the curriculum, and to faculty and student interest. It is intended as a guide in coordinating collection development throughout the General Libraries. The policy identifies in detail the subjects of collecting interest, and attempts to quantify the collecting levels which support these subjects. It has been made specific enough to guide daily book selection, to help frame parameters of blanket order and approval plans, and to assist in gift acceptance. It also provides guidance in such matters as duplication and location of materials. The policy is subject to revision by the Collection Development Committee as the university's needs and objectives change.

In compiling the document, there were a number of rewards experienced by those involved in its creation. The process made us think constructively about the existing collections, their strengths and their weaknesses. It made us think about the various sub-divisions of the particular subject fields, and, of course, it made us think about our goals, our resources, and the future. All of these things had to be considered when assigning the collecting levels. It was, also, a valuable experience in bringing together members of the library staff and the faculty to discuss mutual concerns in collection development. As stated earlier, this kind of consultation is essential to gaining acceptance of the policy itself and, certainly, the more faculty input which can be obtained, the better.

To reiterate one of the last points which Richard made, and which I believe our experiences have certainly borne out, is that a policy is just that; it is a guideline. Selection is more of an art than a science, and will never be a mechanical process. There is no substitute for the informed judgment of a selector, a person who is conversant with the literature of a subject, who has a "nose" (if I may put it that way) for detecting the good, solid work which will really add strength to the collection, and the item which everyone could just as easily live without. However, a policy is certainly very valuable in giving long-term direction to a collection's growth, and in trying to eliminate as much as possible the arbitrariness and bias of individuals. Through the judicious use of a policy, you gain a more balanced growth in the collections. The result of using such a policy in a proper way should be a collection which is stronger and more useful than one which would grow haphazardly, responsive to the fads and whims of the moment.

DECISION MAKING AND THE LIMITS OF POLICY
Michael J. Benedict

At the risk of some misunderstanding, I am amazed how closely the Collection Development Committee of the University of Texas followed the same process we did in formulating a collection development policy for a public library. I have written a paper which has in it a few things already discussed, so I shall just skip them and discuss what we went through.

It was exciting. We never did have a committee meeting at the Houston Public Library wherein we did not have heated discussions. At the same time, we were developing statements on which our library would have to rely, and we felt that the issues were important enough to work out, no matter how difficult. As already noted in the earlier papers, you have to build something very strong, something which has a firm foundation, and upon which you can build your collection. The larger the system, the more the need for a good policy and yet the larger the system, the more difficult it becomes for the individual librarian in the system to have a strong voice in it. I shall go through my paper, bring out some of these points, and discuss them.

Although there had been a need to revise our collection development policy for a long time, we found ourselves updating it only after the policy had been heavily criticized by the public. When our committee met, this was uppermost in our minds and, of course, we had to deal with it. At the same time, we were trying to build the universal principles which have been discussed here already, and this was very difficult. The committee, faced with a dilemma, dealt with it the best

way it could and wrote a document which supported basic freedoms. In a public library, these freedoms are extremely important because we are dealing systematically with individuals. Being an institution, like a university, the public library has the same problems of selection, but it deals with the total community of people in an area. In addition, the public library is expanding into networks and cooperative agreements with universities. As a result, we had to develop statements supporting basic freedoms, together with statements on collection development reflecting a broad commitment to research.

Collection development statements in a public library are symbolic. On the one hand, you depend on the public to tell you what it wants, and on the other, you must make professional judgments which go beyond the immediate needs of your community. Selection judgments are made every day in a public library - as in any library - and a policy should guide the librarian to see the total picture. As the specific issues are hammered out, the general statements should encompass the answers simply and cohesively.

Freedom of the individual public librarian is at issue here. In the committee meetings, the more we tried to define what a large public library should be, the more we realized how diminished the librarian's input was. There is another side to this dilemma. The public and the publishing industry do not understand that input is not "ground out" in all libraries. The publishing industry, of course, thinks there is tremendous control over what goes into a library. There is control in a sense, but there is always selection. Selection goes through, and should go through, a number of librarians for reasons of checks and

balances. This is what we tried to achieve in our policy - the ground work for the proper checks and balances.

This brings up a point which has not been raised today, but it does need raising, and that is - libraries do not have to buy everything. This is, I believe, the reason we are "under the gun" right now. The public feels that a book should or should not be in the library. The people who think certain things should be in the library will raise less of a ruckus than those who want to remove something from the library. This is what you have to allow for in writing your policy. When we began, we wanted some sort of policy we felt comfortable with. We were looking for something "safe". I now know this is the wrong attitude to take since you place yourself between it (this safe thing) and the public. You can not place it between you and the public because it will stifle your communications with the public, and it will stunt your collection.

Eventually, we compiled a basically good document; one which will back us up, and one which will enable us to make meaningful decisions. Still, we must make the specific decisions every day, and there is no document existing which will change that.

This raises another point. If decisions must be made continuously, regardless of the policy, some "mistakes" will be made. Therefore, it is impossible to assume only one frame of mind: total freedom, or censorship. Choices demand keeping an open mind, and we, as librarians, are going to make "mistakes", at least in the minds of other people. Although this may not be the forum in which to state this, I would like to see, in years to come, better understanding among librarians such as I have seen here at this Texas Library Association Conference.

I know there are one or two librarians in the state who are in "trouble" right now and who would welcome such understanding.

Working with a committee to develop a collection development policy has been a tremendous experience for me. We aimed for something we would be proud of, and, even with its limitations, we achieved it. If you are faced with re-writing a policy, my best wishes go with you. I hope you arrive at something which is equally strong for your purpose.

NOTES

1. Collection Management: A Quarterly Journal Devoted to the Management of Library Collections (formerly known as the De-Acquisitions Librarian) is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. Volume 1 extends over a two-year period (Spring 1976 - Winter 1977), and Volume 1, Nos. 1 and 2 were published under the title of De-Acquisitions Librarian. Volume 2 started with Spring 1978. Subscriptions are on a calendar year, per volume basis only, $25.00 per volume. Orders should be directed to The Haworth Press, 149 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010. Telephone (212) 228-2800.

2. Center for Research Libraries (CRL), 5721 Cottage Grove Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637. Founded in 1949 and operating with a staff of 70, CRL's membership consists of 167 institutions. Members cooperatively acquire research materials, and deposit infrequently used items at the Center. Holdings, totaling over 3,000,000 volumes, cover all subjects in all languages, including much in microform.

3. Order from: The Library Office, The General Libraries, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78711. Prepay, $10.00.